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SUBJECT: ROMANIA SEEKS NATO CLEARINGHOUSE FOR MOLDOVA
INDIVIDUAL PARTNERSHIP ACTION PLAN

¶1. During an October 4 courtesy call by D/PolChief, Romania's MFA Deputy Director for NATO Geta Medeleanu requested US support for setting up a NATO clearinghouse mechanism to help Moldova through implementation of its Individual Partnership Action Plan. Medeleanu said that the non-paper (para 3 below), was distributed to NATO capitals, but the MFA was hoping for maximum coverage. Bucharest continues to support strengthening Euro-Atlantic linkages with Chisinau, and believes that a NATO clearinghouse mechanism would be a vital part to more frequent and effective engagement. The recent referendum in Transnistria has unsettled the region somewhat, thus looking for ways to reaffirm concretely ongoing Trans-Atlantic interests is fundamental to everyone's interest.

¶2. Comment: While Bucharest seeks to establish its bona fides as the NATO regional branch office on the Black Sea, it also hopes to use NATO cover to play big brother to Moldova. Though Romania would not mind becoming the de facto Easternmost gatekeeper for the alliance, it is doubtful that Bucharest will successfully convince other Allies that it should hold the key for Moldova's aspirations. End Comment.

¶3. Begin non-paper:

Setting up a Clearinghouse mechanism for Republic Moldova to support the implementation of the Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP) NATO-R. Moldova

¶1. The Rationale

On May 19, 2006, the NAC approved the Individual Partnership Action Plan NATO-R. Moldova, which marks the beginning of a new stage of cooperation and a major step forward in the relationship between R. Moldova and the Alliance. Along with the EU-R. Moldova Plan, the IPAP can catalyze the domestic reforms, including the defense and security sectors-related reforms, thus contributing to putting the country on a firm course towards the Euro-Atlantic community.

Taking into consideration the difficulties encountered by other PfP countries in meeting the objectives included in IPAP and the lack of experience of the Moldovan experts in dealing with this instrument, it is fairly predictable that ¶R. Moldova will need as much assistance and guidance as possible to overcome the challenges in the process of carrying out the activities included in the IPAP matrix.

Against this background, taking into consideration the significant support pledged by the allies during the IPAP presentation at NATO Headquarters, Romania believes that a clearing house mechanism8 dedicated to R. Moldova would be an instrumental mechanism in support of the implementation of

the Individual Partnership Action Plan (IPAP).

12. The Concept

The clearinghouse for R. Moldova would be an informal framework of cooperation opened to voluntary contribution and participation from interested allies and PfP countries which can offer concrete support and assistance to R. Moldova.

The mechanism would include two conferences per year, with participation of experts from ministries of defense and other institutions involved in other areas of security sector reform, of interest for the Moldovan side. Including, for example, experts from ministries of interior could prove beneficial for harmonizing R. Moldova's defense and security sector reform.

Beyond provision of assistance, the clearinghouse mechanism could facilitate exchange of experience between R. Moldova and the participant countries in the above-mentioned areas of reform

The clearinghouse mechanism would be chaired by two or more participant states, which will coordinate closely with R. Moldova on an ongoing basis in organizing the mechanism)related events.

Experts from the International Secretariat have voiced initial support for the set up of a clearinghouse mechanism for R. Moldova, separate from the current ones existing for South East Europe or South Caucasus. A separate mechanism would help donors focus on R. Moldova's special assistance needs and objectives in relation with NATO, which are different from the needs and aims of the countries in South Caucasus (i.e. Georgia) or South East Europe.

In discussions with Romanian representatives, officials in Chisinau endorsed the setting up of a separate clearing house mechanism for R. Moldova, to be coordinated by Romanian, as Contact Point Embassy, together with one or two other allies interested to offer and generate financial assistance for the process of IPAP's implementation.

13. Benefits

This would be a win-win solution, with significant results in terms of progress in IPAP's implementation and optimal harmonization between assistance offers and concrete needs of R.Moldova.

The clearinghouse mechanism will benefit both allies and R. Moldova as it will:

- contribute in a decisive manner to the IPAP implementation by supporting the defense and security sector reforms in R. Moldova;
- help R. Moldova to identify and prioritize its most urgent assistance needs;
- avoid duplication of offers;
- contribute to the harmonization of assistance contributions offered on a bilateral basis by the potential allied and Western PfP donors with R. Moldova's needs;
- rationalize the financial efforts and contributions of the donors and ensure the coherence, transparency, and the consistence of the assistance process;
- signal support from NATO community for Moldova's interest to intensify political dialogue with practical cooperation with the Alliance and acknowledgement of the new level of cooperation with NATO
- encourage authorities in Chisinau to carry out difficult internal reforms and boost public opinion support and visibility for NATO in R. Moldova.

14. Way Ahead

As the clearinghouse is a process based on voluntary contributions, the set up of the mechanism depends upon the level of interest of the potential donor countries.

Consequently, Romania has launched a process of broad consultation with the International Staff, Allied Countries) including allies which currently coordinate clearing house mechanisms) and selected PfP countries) Switzerland, Finland, Austria, Sweden) to determine the level of interest in taking part in a clearing house mechanism for R. Moldova.

Between October 15-17, a NATO experts team will visit Chisinau to assess the progress achieved by R. Moldova in implementing IPAP. Provided that a critical mass of interested contributors can be gathered by that time, a first exploratory meeting with representatives from allied embassies interested to get involved in the clearing house mechanism could be organized during the visit of the NATO experts team in Chisinau. Through its NATO CPE, Romania will inform the allied and PfP countries, which are not currently represented in Chisinau, but are interested to take part in the Clearing house Mechanism, about the results of the discussion.

Romania stands ready to provide further details, if necessary, and would very much appreciate a timely feedback.

End non-paper.
Taubman